

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1686

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJ: UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS TO EXHIBIT; COLLECTOR TO EMIGRATE

1. GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL MOSCOW ARTISTS HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING OVER PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WITH CITY COMMITTEE OF GRAPHIC ARTISTS FOR AUTHORIZATION TO STAGE EXHIBIT IN MOSCOW'S EXHIBITION OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS (VDNKH). ARTISTS OSCAR RABIN TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 6 THAT EXHIBIT HAD BEEN APPROVED "IN PRINCIPLE," BUT THAT MATTER OF EXHIBIT HALL STILL BEING DISCUSSED. HALL OFFERED NORMALLY HOUSES "BEE KEEPING EXHIBIT," AND RABIN SAID IT WAS NOT IDEAL FROM STANDPOINT OF SPACE AND LIGHTING. HE BELIEVES EXHIBIT WILL OPEN ON FEBRUARY 10 OR 11, WITH SOME 20 LOCAL NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS EXPECTED TO EXHIBIT. ARTISTS GROUP HAS "PROMISE" THAT EXHIBIT WILL RUN FOR ABOUT A WEEK. IN CONTRAST TO SEPTEMBER'S ART SHOW AT IZMAYLOVO PARK, NOT ALL NON-UNION ARTISTS WHO WISH TO WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE. ARTISTS THEMSELVES ARE GOING THROUGH SELECTION PROCESS AND APPARENTLY ONLY "BEST" ARTISTS WILL BE INCLUDED. CITY COMMITTEE HAS ALSO REJECTED WORKS OF SEVERAL ARTISTS PROPOSED. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER SOURCE, SOME, IF NOT ALL, ARTISTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN EXHIBIT WILL BE INVITED FOR MEMBERSHIP IN GRAPHIC ARTISTS COMMITTEE, WHICH IS CONSIDERED ONE STEP BELOW MOSCOW UNION OF ARTISTS.

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2. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT ON ART SCENE, ART COLLECTOR ALEKSANDR GLEZER TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 5 THAT HE HAD RECEIVED PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE AND THAT HE WOULD LEAVE FOR LONDON IN NEXT TEN DAYS OR SO. HE HAS ALSO RECEIVED AUTHORIZATION TO TAKE OUT SOME EIGHTY PICTURES, MOST OF THEM BY LEADING NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS. ONLY QUESTION REMAINING IS MATTER OF EXPORT TAX ASSESSMENT, WHICH GLEZER SAYS HAS BEEN SET TOO HIGH. ACCORDING TO OTHER SOURCES, GLEZER HAS ALSO FOUND "UNOFFICIAL CHANNEL" (PRESUMABLY FOREIGN DIPLOMAT) THROUGH WHICH TO SEND OUT NUMBER OF OTHER WORKS OF ART.

3. COMMENT: AUTHORIZATION OF ART EXHIBIT SEEMS TO BE POSITIVE STEP FOR ARTISTS, BUT HAS CAUSED FURTHER SPLITS IN UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS GROUP. SOME HAVE ARGUED THAT EXHIBIT OFFER SHOULD ONLY BE ACCEPTED IF ALL ARTISTS ARE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE, WHILE OTHERS DO NOT WISH TO MISS THE CHANCE TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL OF GREATER ACCEPTABILITY IN EYES OF AUTHORITIES, AND CONSEQUENTLY MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS TO SHOW THEIR WORK PUBLICLY. AT THIS POINT, COMPROMISE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT. AUTHORITIES' AIM SEEMS TO BE TO BRING MOST PROMINENT NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS INTO OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED STRUCTURE IN ORDER TO EXERT GREATER CONTROL OVER THEM.

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